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ROBINSON

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THEATRE AND MUSIC-HALL

To Erik Satie

THE theatre in France, to quote Alphonse Daudet on the monarchy, is "a great dead old thing." The music-hall is a great young thing which is dying. As a matter of habit and to amuse a friend from the provinces, visiting in Paris, we still go occasionally to the theatre: Opéra; Gaîté-Lyrique or Ba-ta-Clan. We hear "Padmavati"; "Chout"; or "T'en fais pas!" Alas, what boredom!

A romantic repertory; conventional gestures; nothing living, moving, happening, which makes one cry out. Today France should get the first prize for bad acting. One has only to see, after a performance of the Cid or of Horace, these gentlemen of the Comédie-Française, in smoking coats, stomachs sticking out, congratulating each other in the wings, to be aware of this agony and to understand at once why it is legitimate to be bored in an orchestra chair.

Novelty is a microbe which directors, managers, actors, electricians, stage directors, door keepers, prompters, pursue and destroy every time that it shows the tip of an ear behind the curtain. I beg you, make way for the dust, the mummies, the glory of past centuries. How comfortable it is to talk among the dead and with what eloquence does Rameses II talk with M. Millerand!

Before the war, from 1912 until the end of August, 1914, there was a leap forward, and there were those who wished to drag the coach out of the mire. Whatever they did, I congratulate them. Léon Bakst revolutionized the usual conception of costumes and of stage decoration. Nijinsky's sensual interpretation of "l'Après-Midi d'un Faune" called forth a storm of cat calls.

(See the ridiculous article by Gaston Calmette in Figaro.) Igor Strawinsky gave his "Sacre du Printemps." Erik Satie already passed for mad. In the realm of the dance, we were forgetting Isadora Duncan, that nullity, in our astonishment over the darling of Valentine de Saint-Point who created "la Metachorie." I do not mean by this that the Muse-Pourpre, as this descendant of Lamartine loved to call himself, invented an entirely new choreography but I cannot deny that we felt a real pleasure in his attempts and experiments.

It was the famous epoch when Paris revelled in the ridiculous. Cardinal Amette, an archbishop, condemned the tango in the name of the church. As a reprisal Eve Lavallière played in a travesty of this name. Gaby Deslys turned things topsy turvy. Henry Bataille undressed Yvonne de Bray in "Phalène." Madame Caillaux killed Monsieur Calmette. De Max played the "Salomé" of Oscar Wilde. Picasso created cubism. Sarah Bernhardt was not yet dead nor had she lost a leg.

Since my pen writes this name, I must say exactly what I think of this tragedienne whose death is deplored by all the world, whose every visit to America was received with incredible enthusiasm. Sarah, against every novelty, was up to her last hour the principal pivot of a delayed fashion. Actors and actresses had their eyes fixed upon her alone and as she, for eighty years, had sung her verse and wept her prose, so all the actors and actresses sang their verse and wept their prose. It can be said that a whole generation limped behind this cripple.

Is it not so, Blanche Dufrêne, you whom I loved and who were found hanged in your dressing-room? Is it not so, Moreno? Jean Vonnell?

On the contrary, the only tragedian who owes nothing to anyone, who searches, feels, composes his text, knows neither fame nor success. . . . I refer to Édouard de Max. It is true that the legend which surrounds him discredits him. I am his friend; I know his home with its burning incense, his old servant, his sumptuous pyjamas, his silk shirts, his mocking spirit, his rings, his melancholy, his bracelets, the depth of his eyes. All this does not prevent me from repeating that he is the only actor, a hundred cubits above a Mounet-Sully or a Gémier.

The war came. It has even been called a great war. The theatre was forgotten and the artists cared for the wounded . . . I was among those who hoped that this period of jansenism would purify the stage and would kill forever this romanticism which horrifies me and which personifies stupidity to me.

American films, sharp as steel, cold like the poles, beautiful as the tomb passed before our dazzled eyes. The gaze of William Hart pierced our hearts and we loved the calm landscapes where the hoof of his horse raised clouds of dust.

The inconceivable, the incomparable, the royal Charlie Chaplin appeared, gros plan net, his two feet turned out and it was inevitable that he was the comic bomb which would overturn the theatre and the music-hall.

Alas, my poor France, country born malicious! You make a barricade against exoticism, and the great ships which return to port, loaded with opium and unknown fruits, are phantom boats which never land. All this is over and it is our players who influence America. It is time to be on guard and to cry out as did Louis Aragon five years ago, "Down with the clear French genius!"

Yes, the theatre is dead, in spite of the efforts of certain ones: de Max, Ventura, Berthe Bovy, Eve Francis, etc. . . . And the music-hall is dying, the supreme hope! It dies, still loaded with fruit, and already one of its most savoury fruits, the poor Fortugé, sleeps under the willows of Bagnolet. It dies because it is not watered but is put under glass. We have enough of revues where they talk of Poincaré, of Sacha Guitry, of Maurice Rostand, etc.; of revues where ugly nude or semi-nude courtesans pass in procession under the baton of the conductor; revues where there is nothing, nothing, nothing.

Imagination dead. It is really too easy to do always the same thing and to satisfy the stupid bourgeoisie. The Casino of Paris is becoming a branch of the Comédie-Française; the Folies-Bergères, a branch of the Odéon. Who would dare to say to a counterfeit dancer like Harry Pilcer that he does not dance; to a counterfeit singer like Mayol that he does not sing; to a counterfeit player like Polaire what she does not act?

For neither Mistinguett, nor Parisys, nor Gaby Montbreuse, nor Cora Madon, nor Mérindol occupy the place to which they are entitled. They are known, of course, but for something quite different. We know that Spinnelly changes her pantaloons twelve times a day, that Parisys changes her gown eleven times a day at Deauville and that is all. . . .

Alas!

The legs of Mistinguett, the breasts of Spinnelly, the buttocks of Parisys, the little stomach of Pépée constitute with Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending the Staircase" the only "poetic" realm in which I can live.

I have enough of the theatre where art is made!

I have enough of the music-hall where art is made!

I have enough of the cinema where art is made!

I have enough of art of art of art of art of art of art of art of art.

For the others = merde.

PIERRE DE MASSOT

July, 1923.

CYCLE DE 5 CRIMES

CRIME DISTINGUÉ

une robe rose de lucioles
gélatine givre dru
cuir
médecin pour les affaires
qui ne marchent pas
boy boy
cria l'impératrice
la jeune fille
tomba morte
c'était le boy

CRIME LONG

la morue de laine dans la crinière du lion
laisse des traces et la salive des escargots tapis
le groom laisse des dépêches dans toutes les chambres
mais dans la 67ème 2e étage on trouva le monsieur en train de
finir la dernière interruption du hoquet de son âge

CRIME SPORTIF

le criminel descend dans un parachute
pour éparpiller les soupçons dirigés gracieusement
contre son corps précieux et les bonnes intentions de son visage
spatieux
et accomplit le crime en 12 poses brutales et pittoresques
voilà les suites de l'amour au cinéma où mènent les chemins des
pays homogènes

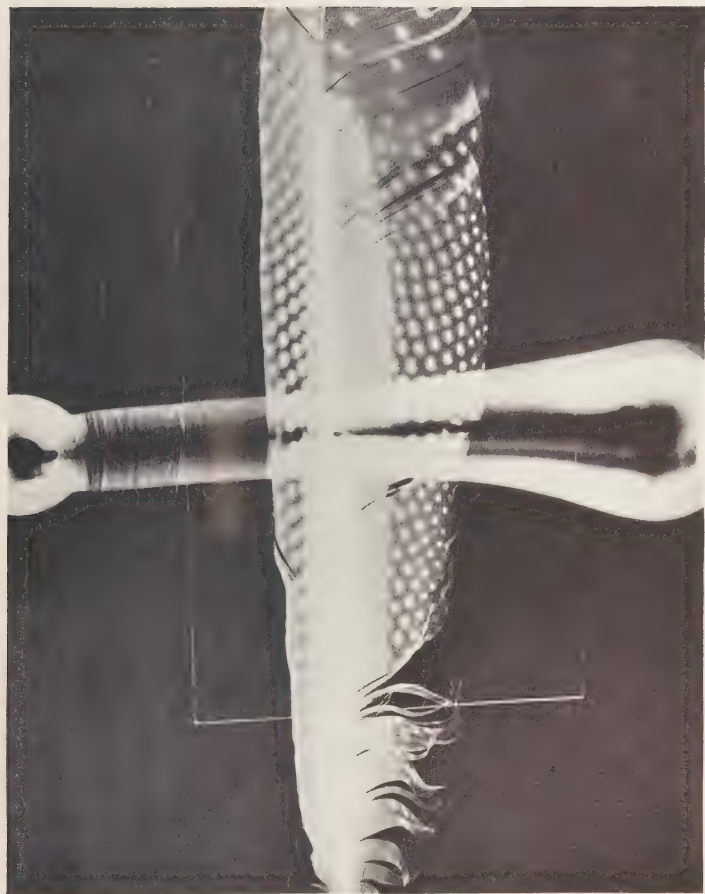
CRIME SOLENNEL

business business dit la jeune apparition
simple constatation pour le portefeuille du commissaire
qui l'aimait
qui le tuait
qui l'enterrait
qui le buvait
qui l'allumait
qui le croyait
et qui l'aimait
tant de questions notifiées a l'ambassade des états-unis a l'hôtel
crillon

remarques
liquidez vos affaires avant de mourir
tout le monde crève car la mort est brève
la mort est chère mais la vie est bon marché
sur les lèvres de papier maigre
préparez vos mystères dans la mare aux allusions

CRIME A VOIR CLAIR

orang et gibbon
lion et chat
puma et chat
rat et souris
monstre au décolleté angélique de glacier poli
aux moustaches de brandebourgs et aux jambes en ciseaux
s'introduit dans l'appartement
sirop de groseille par la paille du gosier
que croyez-vous que nous avons trouvé le matin?
un jeune homme de 16 ans
allumant la dernière allumette de son sang expirant et compromis
pour l'homme



BY MAN RAY



BY MAN RAY



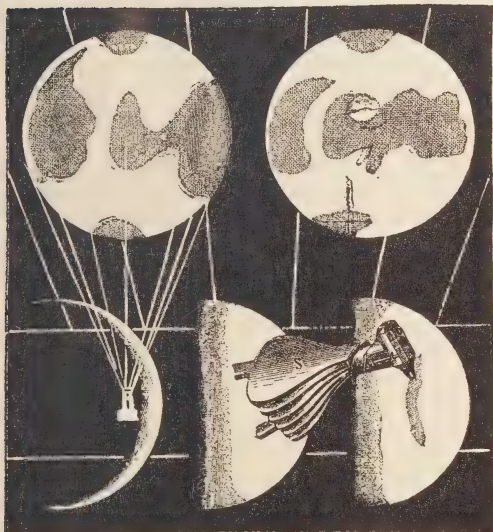
BY MAN RAY



BY MAN RAY

**pour les singes anthropomorphes
pour les félins
pour le rat et la souris
pour les perroquets
pour la pie le corbeau
pour les rapaces diurnes
pour les canards sauvages
pour le paon le faisan
elle est égale**

 **TRISTAN TZARA**



BY MAX ERNST

DADA PAINTING OR THE OIL-EYE

THE bigwig, reality, is the straw man of tickertape-brains which daily retails its gallons of philosophy, fire-works, morals, science, politics and perfumes; he it is who for the most part supports the vulgar idiots that painters usually are. Sight is the suction pipe of his material.

Sight is the lowest sense, so low that it should simply be worn under the sole of one's boot. It is the enemy of poets. It is true that poets . . . but all the same, after the game of heads and tails, they are the most suave consolation of our days. The eye throws the dirt, which it has absorbed from outside, into the wheels of fantastic imagination and prevents them from turning. Scarcely has the brain begun to weave charming chains of illogical and boneless flowers when the hydra springs into one's eye to recall one to virtue. It is impossible not to see, except at night or in a cellar, but it is there that painters decay. Poets can be blind. Painters can not and yet it is the only condition under which they would be able to wave from the top of minarets their peacock plumed hats that should tickle the heart and bowels of the amateur of amateurs.

The cubists are pale succubae whom grabbing prostitution, freshly painted with the old putrefaction of aesthetic morgues, comes to visit. After a few slaps on the behind of the bourgeois impressionist women, they send off into the sky pretty rockets of mud and caramels. They are delicious and as prolific as flies, mice and lice.

The dadaistes are not the sons of the cubists. Some among them once dipped a finger into the bouillon cube and immediately put it in their mouths to see what kind of a taste it had. There is no one who has not sometime in his life taken an emetic. They are neither sons nor fathers of anyone. No prophets announced them.

The grumblings of the legal painter put them outside painting entirely. It seems that only the gorillas and the monkeys with their blue buttocks have the right to paint, this being the art of obscene grimaces, palatable or tearful before the thighs, the apples or the horizons. The dadapainters are outside the plastic? They would be especially favored if they could escape

but the very fact of tracing anything on a piece of paper or a bit of glass is within the realm of the plastic after all.

But the dada painters have broken with sight. They paint or design as if they did not see. This thanks to the dexterity of dada. They have materially speaking neither technique nor method, of which one can say—Oh, how very dada! Each one follows his own bent without bothering about dada laws of colour, form or logic. Dada if you can!

There was once a painter-pope who called himself Papadada, and who was sent by Dada; since then one perceives his pop-valve letting off the steam of a personality like that of an ordinary great painter: those like Raphael, Rembrandt and Ziem sign many more pictures than they make. He says not to be dada. One believes him without difficulty.

Three dadapainters: Arp, Man Ray, and Max Ernst.

Arp in his wood cuts and reliefs is the most free from any adherence to the visual sense. He is the only one for whom the eye is not the monkey-face tyrant. At least with him it is a matter of an eye which has never seen the light nor the world and which has thrown nothing on the interior screen. He is the blind painter. It could be said that his hand paints by hearsay. He who looks enters with him into the harshness of the night.

You walk along a corridor where there is no ray of light. Doubtless you pass a man or a woman. Sometimes something sharp penetrates you from a distance without a shock except that of an unconscious revolt of the useless eye, but you do not know of what familiarity it is the promontory nor where the inevitable little wardrobe of sentiments is to be found. So well concealed, so perfectly absent from the bath-room and pyrotechnic chamber. Arp is Arp.

Man Ray is the subtle chemist of mysteries who sleeps with the metrical fairies of spirals and steel wool. He invents a new world and photographs it to prove that it exists. But as the camera also has an eye, although without a heart, he suppresses it. It is no longer a question of preserving images in a box; but of making an astonishing destructive projection of all formal art which never the less recreates for the love of the external thing the most unexpected and the most precious relativity of time and of space. One finds one's self belonging to many fields

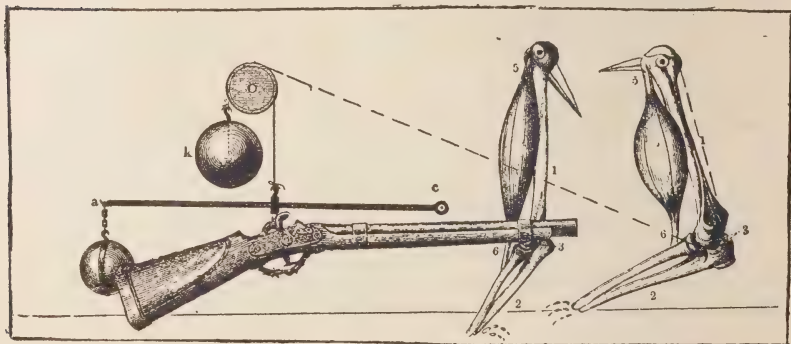
of gravitation at the same time where the importance of the qualities has totally disappeared, where the casuality hardly touches the spirit, where the objects have ceased to be sultan postulates accompanied by harems.

Max Ernst holds in his hand a bouquet of flowers. One of the flowers is a flower, another is a woman's leg, another a hat, another a young child, another some sea weed, another a little elephant. The poetry germinates and flowers, watered by the streams where circle the mystic cleaners who polish appearances and carry in a bag the noble organs destined for digestion. The poetry flows like a mineral source, rises like a bird's vapour, solidifies like a frozen breast. It is impossible to breathe normally before a picture of Max Ernst, because we have not yet acquired the complete organism to live in this new medium, when the bouquet begins to grow out of the little pearl at the end of the fingers.

Marcel Duchamp is a comet that crosses and attracts the solar system without our knowing whether it belongs to it or not. It is in the midst of space on the same road as dada, but with other seasons, days and nights. It will never pass over the same route but its light and the trail of its light has been seen. Perhaps we shall go on seeing it if the universe tips to the same side and we roll together our glands in our hands. The smile of the heart desires it.

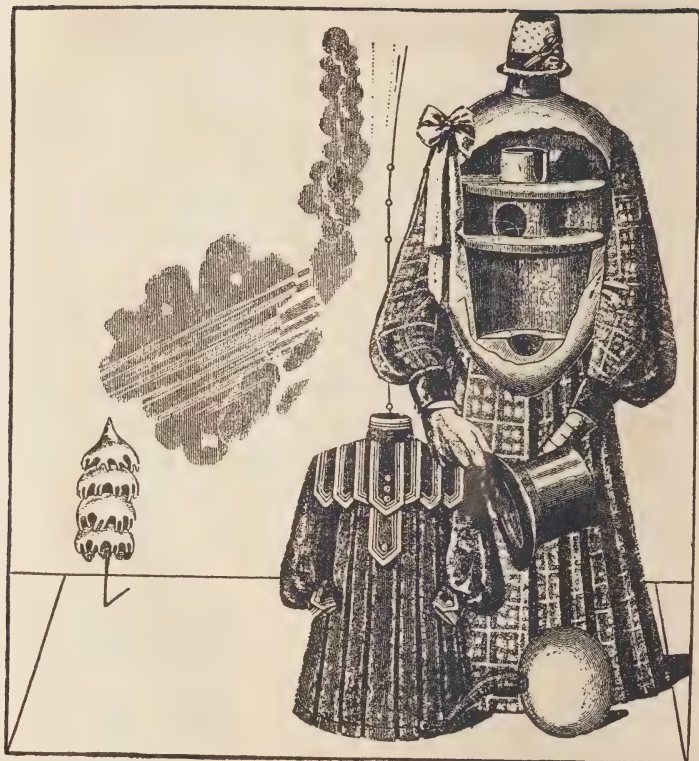
This is all that I know of the eyes of dada, excuse me for not being an oculist.

G. RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES





BY MAX ERNST



BY MAX ERNST



BY HANS ARP



BY HANS ARP



BY HANS ARP

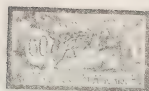


BY HANS ARP



BY JEAN HUGO

*First sketch for Bride and Groom in Cocteau's "Les
Maries de la Tour Eiffel."*



CALCULS
de la VESSIE



CALCULS
du CERVEAU



G.R.D.

BY G. RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES

DONNEZ-MOI DE VOS NOUVELLES

AVEC tes yeux je change comme avec les lunes
Et je suis tour a tour et de plomb et de plume:
Une eau mystérieuse et noire qui t'enserre
Ou bien dans tes cheveux ta légère victoire.

*

Les enfants jouaient et riaient,
Le soleil amusait les femmes
Et les hommes sortaient de terre
Pour mettre leurs passions
A la portée des astres.

*

Grande Ursule, grande Héloïse,
Graves,
Soumises,
Vous n'etes plus pour le plus brave
Mais pour moi qui ne vous aime pas.

*

Rigueur, contrainte, discipline,
Qu'abritent-ils ces mots vulgaires?
De l'or, du fer, du plomb,

O! mes aïeux.

Moi, je suis un homme avec des yeux et des cheveux,
Avec des mains sans attaches
Et des paroles qui ne persuadent pas.

*

Ma soeur la raison
Est morte sans raison.
Je l'aimais beaucoup.

PAUL ELUARD

A MAN

HAVING shaken his head with both hands as though he were playing with dice, the man lets his thoughts arrange themselves in equilibrium on the nervous cords of his favorite instincts. "I have always disregarded things that came from my mind," he said without the slightest mocking smile. He looks in his pocket mirror at his eyes with his eyes, charming coincidence. The little hole opposite a little hole shows up the fine combination; all is changed, nothing is changed, it is you? It is I. Boring one, it is I. In the little hole in capitals of twelve one reads:

IT IS BETTER TO KILL ONE'S FATHER THAN TO EAT NUTS or all other evidence: I think only by evidence. Having shaken my head with my two hands I read in the same apparatus before the fall of the dice, clickyty click. IT IS BETTER TO EAT ONE'S FATHER THAN TO KILL NUTS, then a click, the man's eyes light up as though electrically lighted, his mouth speaks: "For, as to manners, everybody is so sure of his own point of view that it would be possible to find as many reformers as there are heads" and doesn't favor the least in the world any other possibility.

The little society game distinguishes me from the animals (I am a sociable animal) thanks to a pretty error which must be considered: the false movement, effect of light giving freely and without danger the impression of perpetual revolution, serve it hot that thought-out reasoning, reasonably reasoning! draw a line, you have the addition, make your total, the result will show an increase of my personality, flattering conclusions on life; my thermal season. The man opens his skull, with the index finger of his right hand he moves the reluctant counting balls, closes the box again, then with satisfaction shakes his head without his hands: noise. Thus morals begin.

First, without other explanation than this invoked evidence the man denies that there could ever be any answer to a theorem, and affirms that corollaries are ways of speaking. That which saves him from the trouble of examining its validity. Do not do unto others that which you would not wish done unto you and its analogues. All the cases are exceptions, impossible to be united

by a law; the same fact can not present itself other than as itself. One understands, the man understands why all philosophers have poured out their life's blood without giving to morals a satisfactory foundation: poor dupes of an image, who really believe the ideas made on the pattern of a house, with a cellar, a roof and a little weathercock on top. (He who speaks here is dupe of their dupery since he develops it, prisoner of the absurd metaphor which invades his mental field).

Secondly, proud of the hole cut in his morality, the man dresses himself up in it as though it were a skirt and discourses of what he would like to have done to himself: "I imagine why I have chosen myself as the interlocutor, preferable to any novice; it is because I wished to ask no question that could be easily answered. I should say, therefore, that I am a man, and like always to be considered one, and above everything else I discard the idea of any reciprocity as insane, I will never call anything a man except myself. Therefore, nothing binds me to a rule of action in connection with I invent my successive gestures, without effort or remorse.

Thirdly, fourthly, hundredthly, having shaken up his ideas without moving his head, like the god of the catichism who makes but one gesture in order to say that he has no need to make a gesture, the man discovers the thousand axioms obtained by mixing his little thought, while shuffling the cards, without bothering to know if the queen and the jack of the same colour brought together constitute an incest (category 43 of customs to be avoided) and the ace of spades with the seven of hearts a more savoury adventure:

- a) man acts only through goodness;
- b) goodness begins with the day and never ends;
- c) man does to others neither good nor evil but he does well to believe that he does evil;
- d) man believes that he does evil to give himself heart;
- e) man has complete liberty of mind;
- f) man is a great benefactor of humanity (philanthropist);
- g) man recognizes himself in man and punishes his fellow creature through a spirit of justice with the faults which he discovers in himself;

- h) man doesn't care about means;
- i) man laughs;
- j) man speaks;
- k) man is a famous liar;
- l) man cannot lie but he extricates himself by generalities;
- m) man knows well what is the matter;
- n) the question is, man;
- o) man expects better of man;
- p) he is superior to him;
- q) inferior, in any case never equal;
- r) man runs no danger;
- s) man has no weapon to defend himself;
- t) no one attacks him;
- u) man would like to descend from the monkey in order to have a gallery of ancestors;
- v) man questions himself as a matter of form;
- w) man never questions himself;
- x) man does not understand french;
- y) man thinks of something else;
- z) it is why man thinks of nothing.

So are morals born. Having shaken his hands without his head, the monsieur who says that he is a man rolls up his cuffs, and says: "Nothing in my hands, nothing in my pockets" and presto out of nothing comes the donkey guide awaited by the greater part of the spectators:

DONKEY-GUIDE

One imagines that man, let us call him M to simplify it, has neither duties nor rights. If we then keep the classification, rights and duties toward others, himself, his parents, his children, his country, his husband or wife, etc., let us understand that we have in mind only the relations of the dear gentleman with these different entities without making any judgments in the matter. We shall, therefore, call them relationships

Relations of M and his father and mother:

Today there is no longer material for even a vaudeville sketch

in the Oedipus story: should any author use it, he would be hissed off the stage. The same holds true for other stories of this kind. No one conceals his incestuous loves any longer.

A hundred years ago crimes of passion were punished with death; under the influence of romanticism they are no longer dangerous for their perpetrators. In fifty years, under the influence of DADA, parricides will be acquitted with the congratulations of the jury.

Relations of M and his children:

They vary, according to the mood of the gentleman, from pure and simple suppression to the meal of Ugolin, who was only a timid fore runner. There should be a law against respect for infancy.

The nineteenth century will have tried in vain to establish the supremacy of youth in the world: the overthrow of its ideas takes place amid general hilarity (the sanctity of childhood is now only a joke).

Relations of the man and his neighbour:

M has no neighbour. He cuts up men and puts them in water to ornament his apartment. He kills as he can at random. He robs, he rests, he fornicates, he reproaches no one, he breaks bodies for his pleasure, he has already said that he is good.

Relations of M with himself:

They are the relations of politeness with brusque attacks of frankness. One sets sail on an uncertain sea: there is no foreseeing the mood of the next minute except perhaps there is an innate horror of blows (and still see the boxers). Has M a self? He asks himself sometimes without the least anxiety. He will know in several years his ideas on suicide.

Relations of M with his family, his country, society, the race, humanity:

They are the relations of humanity, the race, society, country, family with the M.

Blood relationship is not indispensable for sex relations. When one has a large intelligence one admits that two compatri-

ots can be united for an instant without crime; it is only society which would be the outcast; if the children of people of the same race are born albinos the mid-wife laughs; the bestiality is not avoided, etc., murder does not distinguish one individual from another: it is always crushing a spider. It is the same story for other ties.

M recognizes that he is not a reformer but a stage manager: he is vexed, he passes to another exercise, he dances. Soon his head turns, eyes motionless, a hundred and eighty degrees, he sees the depth of his thought, the mercury of the mirror scratched by use with little black lines until it is transparent, his lacy association of ideas. The future appears to him combinations of reflections, days uncoiled like tresses. In business houses the last pleasures of humanity come to an end—hard men speak. Below the crowd, prey to economic furies, watches. By wireless comes the idea which will destroy the equilibrium. To the signal of the clouds a clamor answers, a record of clamor. What adventure I am giving the world! In my childhood I enjoyed the history of the sack of Rome by the French. It is that which has grown in me, dawn risen on the massacre. A marvelous bit of murder! The day when someone will have found the explosive which will destroy the world, someone will be found to use it, in spite of laws, century old, dictated by the fear of this unique event. That is why I think.

LOUIS ARAGON

L'AZUR

PRAIRIES de la nuit tardive
ou sont parties les amoureuses
comme tant de venins si doux
Cortège de pleureuses

On voit des coeurs qui s'abreuvent
à l'astre de source chaude

Et puis partir un beau matin
ce sera la route de miel
Partir cueillir l'égantine
à la lèvre des bien aimées

Lune

O lune ravin de la nuit
Oeil de délire des séraphins
N'es tu donc pas la si belle
déesse O belle-de-nuit

C'est l'ivresse éclatante qui courbe les éclairs.

JACQUES BARON

CHANSONS

UNE chèvre regarde un éléphant
un éléphant regarde une chèvre
il va sûrement se passer quelque chose
l'éléphant voit la chèvre
et réciproquement (bis)
et réciproquement (bis)

LES trois frères bleus ont très peur
ils regardent en l'air
il pleut
ils regardent par terre
il n'y a rien
es trois frères bleus ont encore très peur.

PHILIPPE SOUPAULT



BY JUAN GRIS



BY JUAN GRIS



BY JUAN GRIS



DOLLS

BY JUAN GRIS

LE QUART D'UNE VIE

I

A L'INTÉRIEUR
le catalogue vendait des huitres vivantes
qui pleuraient et qui chantaient
sur un air américain

II

Les feuilles qui sont tombées
ont emporté les deux taxis
Les taxis ont renversé les sémaphores
Les sémaphores tombés
le lait ne coulera plus
car les moustaches tombées
ne repousseront plus

III

Nous sommes plus heureux que la mousse
la mousse n'a pas de cheveux
et nous portons des chapeaux
Pauvres chapeaux aux ailes couvertes de givre
la fumée des cigarettes vous excite
mais le pétrole
le pétrole sournois qui vide les ostensoirs
est plus léger à vos reins
que les chaines d'aluminium

IV

Croupissez regards des sulamites
Il pleut il neige
sous le soleil qui vous déteste
les chiens mangent la merde
les ceinturons s'enrichissent des sabots des vieux chevaux
qui les oreilles percées
le ventre lumineux
vendent leurs chemises aux portes des églises
sans se soucier des cachalots et des zébres
joli mois d'aout c'est le mois de zébre

les zébres ont trop bu
bu bu bu et boira
boira qui voudra
mais ce n'est pas moi qui le voudrai
c'est trop laid le cercelet
qui sans sourire court à la chapelle
téléphoner aux parfumeurs

V

C'est un jour Saint un jour sacré
un jour sacré à l'hôtel
vivent les atlas sous les bateaux.

VI

Plûtôt que périssent les cannibales
nous démolirons les pianos
nous interdirons les vendanges
nous arrêterons les marées

VII

Couverture des étoiles
le vent roule des motocyclettes
Il ne croit pas à l'eau salée
et symbolise les aspirations de peuples
comme la guerre
comme les vêtements.

VIII

La cavalerie n'est pas loin
et les oscillations non plus

IX

Vers le ciel de juillet
montent les fourrures ovipares
Le serrurier militaire
invente le contrepoint
nécessaire à la nourriture des abeilles

X

L'éléphant sans moteur
naquit sans scandale
Absalon la-main-verte lui sourit
et rangea les lis de ses visières
sur un poteau
sur une épingle
Guettée par le scorbut
elle sera veuve un jour

XI

Alors de la gouttière
un membre mal fermé
dont le nom mal brosse
degoulinait sur un poisson
s'enflamma sans dégoût
sa destinée fut courte comme une sueur
Ma soeur
as-tu vu ma pipe
Ma pipe est morte
et mon grand oeil est sans saveur

BENJAMIN PÉRET

NAUFRAGE

LA nuit dans le métal
et la peau de la mare
qui frissonne au signal
du ciel
 plié au coin
 ou du vent
 qui s'égare
Tout au rond de l'écueil
 et des racines sombres
 les pierres et les mains
 qui se serrent dans l'ombre
Là le recueil de pluie
 et des trous a leur nombre
on reconnaît ce front
 au timbre matinal
 a la lueur des arbres
 et tous les bruits du soir
 qui s'étouffent au marbre
 du parapet d'air noir
Au sommier de la vague
Au creux du bras plié
Une pensée qui sonne
 Un cri trop répété
 Entre l'abîme ouvert
 Au cercle relevé.

PIERRE REVERDY

WHICH WAY?

TWENTY years ago visitors came to Paris for Sarah Bernhardt, the Sole Marguery and the Eiffel Tower. Sarah Bernhardt, dead and buried and her clothes sold at auction; Marguery is only a vulgar eating house keeper but the Eiffel Tower has not lost a bit of its prestige. The painter, Delaunay, finds it so fascinating that he puts it in all of his pictures; the morning paper announces that a cyclist has descended its stairway; spring before last Jean Cocteau staged a ballet, a wedding party, whose scene was laid on the first platform; recently we saw again the bride, the groomsmen, the maids of honour, the general, who, thanks to a mirage, after showing us the cyclist of Chatou and the bather of Trouville, was devoured by a lion. Remarks: this honest general . . . this brave general . . . a child with too big a head because he wishes to live his life; the wedding party is photographed and the group is admired by the old picture dealer. Everyone laughs and the Eiffel Tower is the tower of Paris as the leaning tower is the tower of Pisa.

But for one comedy ballet which keeps all its gayety how many works are there in the new manner of 1921 which are already *demodé*?

The puns on the subsidized theatres and the Academy are no better than the theatres and the Academy; one laughs at traditions, but too often the revolutionary spirit only contradicts itself and seeks different traditions, but traditions all the same; so many a person has manufactured a bomb to destroy detestable monuments and then has been content simply to place his bomb on the mantelpiece, make a thousand copies of it which he puts on sale like the Venus of Milo in cheap plaster.

In fact men too easily justify themselves in thinking that they are no longer victims of the political mania and of the deplorable party spirit if they have replaced one system by another. One should denounce the danger of this opportunism, by which some so-called poets speak of modernism, like merchants of those creations which make their clients look like twins.

Besides a solution is not easy and with a smile Tristan Tzara remarks "the absence of system is but another system." But it is chiefly the lack of power to insist on life without tradition which condemns us to petty forms of snobism, to petty vices, to the taste of hysterical women, to sleeping cars and to dynamos, that is to say, to the worst and most popular type of literature in a century in which everyone boasts of not being literary. There results an excessive glory for certain authors (as a matter of fact, I can think of but one of them, Paul Morand, but the enormity of his success merits the pain of the plural) who know how to flatter men and to put into their books such an impersonality that under the disguise of a false exotism each one thinks that he recognizes himself, tells his neighbour, who in his turn buys for himself, at a bargain, that which he finds a flattering portrait of his own little person. This is "real twentieth century," people say of such a work, as if there could possibly be a real twentieth century brand of work. As for me if anyone would accept the challenge I should like to wager and to demonstrate that Homer was Dada, Sainte Cecilia a famous futurist and Tristan Tzara under the influence of Aeschylus.

But since it is necessary sometimes to speak seriously, that is with the help of phrases known to us all, we notice that objects have no other role than to move the subject, rhythm differs according to individuals; certainly the *real* individual must not be confounded with the apparent man whom we see at the theatre, on the street; I have said *real individual* but to avoid all confusion the better term would be *superreal individual*.

No one has better described this *superreal individual* than André Breton. I shall quote from an article of his which appeared in *La Revue Littérature* in which he treats of super-realism. "The word superrealism which is not our invention and which we should have been so well able to abandon to the vaguest critical vocabulary, is employed by us in a precise sense. By it we have agreed to indicate a certain automatism which corresponds fairly well to a dream state, a state which is today very difficult to place any limits upon. I beg pardon for adding a personal observation here. In 1919 my attention was fixed upon the more or less partial phrases which in complete solitude, at the approach of slumber, become perceptible to the mind

without it being possible to discover in them a previous determination. These phrases, remarkably pictured and with a syntax perfectly correct, have appeared to me to be poetic elements of the first order. At first I was content merely to hold them, but later Soupault and I tried to create in ourselves the state in which they could be produced."

From the application of this discovery comes a curious book by Breton and Soupault, "Les Champs Magnétiques." Having no right to choose some sentences rather than others, I quote at random:—"*We have been compelled to visit cheap factories of dreams and shops filled with obscure dramas. There was a magnificent cinema where the roles were taken by old friends. We lost sight of them and always found them again in the same place. They gave us rotten dainties and we told them our vague joys. Their eyes fixed upon us, they spoke; can one really remember those ignoble words, their lulling songs? We have given them our heart which was only a pale song.*"

I am often tempted to speak of humanism, of knowledge of others and of ourselves, a mania for which I ask pardon; truly lines like these make us feel more, tell us more of certain personalities than any novel, even the most advanced. Professor Freud by the psychoanalytic method tries to uncover that which we force back into our unconscious. Superrealism claims to open wide the doors; and because it really does open them, there is no constraint; these mysterious words arise without affected romanticism, without calculated pose. They have multiple reflections and it is difficult not to be carried away by their spontaneous and free current. I mean that superrealism, product of an absolute intellectual emancipation, distinguishes whomsoever has the courage of wishing to profit by it. This discipline (discipline, I could remark, parodying Tzara, because the absence of discipline is but another discipline) is that of the superman whom Nietzsche in spite of his wish did not succeed in finding; its grandeur can not be denied; far removed from grandiloquence, it permits all the elements of the superreal individual to sing each its own song. Philippe Soupault, for example, loves gayety, wishes to amuse himself by the way—

"Look at an animal in the white of the eyes
without blushing
without having the air of taking any notice
while squinting if possible
while stamping the foot
while clapping the hands."

And Tzara asks us—

"You know the calendars of the birds?
How?

365 birds—every day a bird flies away—every hour
a feather falls—every two hours one writes a poem—
one cuts it up with scissors."

I should like to talk more about this kind of gayety perfect enough to attain humor. But why group under one heading individuals of such freedom? And then I should have to devote long pages also to love for I recall the "Coeur a Gaz" by Tzara, the poems of the youthful Jacques Baron, of Paul Eluard.

Pardon me if I recite a little of them to myself. First are the declarations of Oeil, one of the personages of the "Coeur a Gaz." "Clytemnestra, wife of a minister, looked out of the window; the violincellists passed by in a carriage of Chinese tea, biting the air and the caresses with open heart. You are beautiful, Clytemnestra, the crystal of your skin awakens the curiosity of our sexes; you are tender and calm like two metres of white silk."

Say with me this poem of Paul Eluard.

IN THE DANCE

"Little childish table
there are women whose eyes are like pieces of sugar
there are serious women like the movements of love and that one
does not surprise
there are women with pale faces
Others like the sky on the eve of a windy day.



BY ANDRÉ MASSON



BY ANDRÉ MASSON



BY ANDRÉ MASSON



BY GEORGES BRAQUE

Little gilded table of fete days
there are women of green and dark wood
those who weep;
of dark and green wood
those who laugh.

Little table too low or too high
there are fat women
with slight shadows
there are hollow dresses
dry dresses
dresses that one wears at home and that love never makes go out.

Little table
I do not like the tables upon which I dance,
I didn't realize it."

What young people would not wish to murmur this air of
Jacques Baron?

"The flower that I love is charming
like a woman with a tender glance
flown away like a halo
what do you know of our loves
of the week and of the years
my friend the delicious flower."

Have we the right to judge poets and to roll their names about
in our mouths like chewing gum until the point is reached when
they will no longer wish to say anything? If I state that the
greatest quality of Tzara is humour, I should quickly forget his
varied riches. Indolence makes us list individuals under one
heading that we call a school; but speaking accurately the indi-
vidual is a complex whole and the childish error must not be
made of believing that the states of soul of such or such a one
are always of the same red, green, white or blue, which would
be like believing that negroes are equally black with identical
features.

There are not tender poets, lyric poets, tragic poets, there are poets, and it is even not necessary to say poets but men among men. These only interest us and not the followers of one school or another; the little groups keep to their own formulas, become opportunists and more and more it seems that anxiety alone can give dignity to men.

Drieu la Rochelle loves his country like a woman; because his passion is on the alert, it makes a disturbance, is troubled, questions. After all the boring and stupid books on the war and the future of the world, he writes "Mesure de la France," a song, at once spontaneously subtle and new. Louis Aragon in his nights of Paris in quest of love runs the whole gamut of sensuality. He has no taste for those little perversions which today are almost the normal, but whether the voluptuous gesture is this or that, the cry of the happy, wounded, triumphant, despairing flesh rises full of anguish and of beauty.

All these of whom I have spoken pass in Paris for the moderns. Many try to copy them, seek to discover their formula, to use it, to make a school. The latter are dangerous because they are boring; perhaps they give a little foundation to what is called a reaction. But the word reaction has no precise meaning, it is used as an alibi; one forgets one's self. Reaction? There is bound to be the reaction from one thing to another. Then why force the natural play; when literary theories are mentioned we should turn our backs.

RENÉ CREVEL

COMMENTS

FRENCH NUMBER. No foreign editor of any kind or standing on or off our staff is responsible for the contents of this issue. I am happy to make up a number which is a comprehensive review, of the work itself, of the most energetic most untrammelled group of young men working in France today. They do not belong to any formal group . . . but they all amuse themselves doing very good work. In a future issue I shall extend the list to Joseph Delteil, Drieu la Rochelle, Marcel Arland, etc. We will be accused of booming the Dadaists . . . why not? (except that these men are not Dada). We have printed more isms than any other ten journals and have never caught one. Our pages are open to *isms, ists, ites* . . . we have been after the work, not the name . . . our drooling critics, in true American fashion, become sea-sick over a name . . . we are enjoying ourselves.

We advise our readers to save this issue of the Little Review for future reference . . . in years to come one of these young men (at the age of Anatole France) may be given a prize, or may be printed in the "Dial." Don't find yourself in the position of the man who cried out when "Waste Land" appeared . . . "If I could only get hold of some old copies of the Little Review I could show these people who this Eliot is."

MENCKEN'S FAREWELL. Someone—everyone is always egging me on to write about something that I don't want to write about. Hundreds of subjects are suggested, some of them might be amusing but I am usually finished with them before I am urged to "go after them" in the Little Review. I am not excited, to any pitch, either by achievement or defeat—every one seems to be made of defeat, more or less . . . it is not entertaining to find it out or point it out. Regard my "going after" Dr. Frank Crane! a man who admits that he has been scared into optimism . . . more scares more optimism.

The Barnes Foundation and its first book: "An Approach To Art," an educational book for the public. This is not so bad as a subject, but Mr. Barnes' approach to art is well, internationally known among the artists. "Mr. Barnes of Philadelphia" is too good to waste in a short magazine article. Some one will go into the matter thoroughly and show him up through his own pathological letters, which he has lavished upon a rather dangerous audience.

It is amusing for a few moments to play with the idea of challenging Mr. Mencken to explain some of his recent statements and to produce his superior, secret artists.

"Today, it seems to me, the American imaginative writer, whether he be novelist, poet or dramatist, is quite as free as he deserves to be. He is free to depict the life about him precisely as he sees it, and to interpret it in any manner he pleases. Our stage is perhaps the freest in the world—not only to sensations, but also to ideas."

I doubt whether Mencken has ever been in a position to know whether the above is true or not, yet he makes the statement quite easily in his sentimental, halo-adjusting farewell to the Smart Set. He has never known the creative artist as a fellow artist, but as a critic and as the hired editor of a commercial magazine: that gulf could never be explained to any critic, editor or layman . . . of all the first-raters that I know, I don't know one who would just naturally send his best or strongest work to the Smart Set . . . that is a part of the thing that makes them first-raters. Somewhere in "Prefaces" Mencken tells just how cagey he has always been about accepting Mss. . . . "before ever I give any thought to its artistic merit and suitability is the question whether its publication will be permitted" . . . does he think that the artists have been less cagey in sending him their work? "I have a long list of such things by American authors, well-devised, well-imagined, well-executed, respectable as human documents and as works of art, but never to be printed in mine or any other American magazine." I should like to see those documents of wronged American art . . . I am willing to wager that

they are no better "art," whatever he calls them, than half the stuff that pours into this office—nor any more so-called obscene than teething ring prattle compared to the things we have peaceably published. BUT we are not *free* to publish them nor were the writers *free* to write them, as far as America was concerned. Now that everything is free we will wait impatiently for Mr. Mencken to release this flood of genius in his new journal. Also—right here let us take up the herd of perfect "wood-sawing" artists loose somewhere between here and Chicago, known only to Mencken. "There is a group which says little and saws wood . . . they are sophisticated, disillusioned, free from cant . . . out of this dispersed, ill-defined group, I believe something will come." Of course disillusioned, sophisticated, free from can't is a pretty poor recipe for the true creative artist, but all sorts of things are done: cripples' races, blind juggling, etc. There are no unknown geniuses, there is no artist anywhere unknown to other artists . . . this is one of the simplest axioms about the nature of the artist. If Mr. Mencken can pull artists out of the middle west he must use the same formula as the magician with his rabbit. But I am not doubting that they "saw-wood."

I have never been able to read Mencken except for his slang. I have found that amusing when he was "whamming" some second-rate bad thing (has he ever slain a first-rate bad thing?) but when he endorses I feel much the same delight in his criterion as I feel when a salesperson assures me that "they are the smartest—I wear them myself." I should like to know from some Mencken fan just how many first rank things he has fought for, how many truly bad he has fought? He has seemed to me to be oblivious to, or afraid of, first rank men and things. Here is a list of his "artists," his white hopes who have slithered off: Willa Cather, Winston Churchill, Floyd Dell, Hergesheimer, Harry Fuller, Tarkington and Dreiser; it reads like a catch problem in a children's arithmetic—2 muskmelons + 1 cabbage + 3 artichokes + 1 potato = how many potatoes?

Mencken was the perfect critic for the Smart Set audience . . . he has been fighting steadily for fifteen years people who had no fight in them, who would have believed all he had to say, at the end of fifteen years . . . he himself implies that even Mr. Sumner believes him. He has done a great work: he has for

fifteen years been training the American public to read Vanity Fair!

ELEANOR DUSE. I hope the pollyannas of art have had a generous set-back from the recent visit of Duse: those dear people who demand that Art be nature and nature art, who call Abraham Lincoln, Jesus, and Florence Nightingale artists—registering a smile of inner vacuity that could many times lose them their lives, if one had not been taught not to kill a happy oyster. These people have always had a sour word for the “artificialities” of Bernhardt but “Duse doesn’t act—she is always natural.” All right, she is still natural, why the moans and groans? Little Sarah Bernhardt took a day off and perfected an art of acting which could not be affected by a disaster to the very instrument with which she worked, an art that out-lived her life. The instrument does not give out nor wear out—age may take it or any other destruction, but if art has had it first, art will have its way with it till the end. The public that went balmily expectant to see Duse but saw nothing and came away cold was somewhat bewildered. . . . Kenneth McGowan rescued his feelings by laying the blame on every opera-house and theatre in New York. No one seems to be to blame but Nature, and just for being natural!

EVA GAUTIER. Margaret Anderson always says “naturally” to every statement I may happen to make . . . no matter how original, abnormal, unnatural or untrue. At least she was quite right when Eva Gautier gave a group of jazz songs on a formal concert at Aeolian Hall. . . . “Naturally.” I don’t quite understand why the french are so jazz-mad. “The Six” are supposed to spend their lives sitting, like a pack of “His Master’s Voice” hounds, in front of a phonograph playing Black Swan records. But that is not why it is natural that a french woman should be the first to introduce jazz into a high-brow program . . . it is Eva Gautier herself. Gautier has introduced more than seven hundred songs, by new or unknown composers, to the public. We hope there is a reward for that kind of artistic energy somewhere: it is not in the box-office. Music critics are

so repulsive with their unrestrained, repetitious ecstasies and prejudiced méchancetés that one shivers at the thought of making the slightest comment on a performer's work; however I hope I have conveyed that the program was highly pleasing and that I am trying to endorse Gautier.

POETS AND MUSIC. On December ninth, in Paris, George Antheil gave a first audition of his "Two Sonatas for Violin and Piano." He was assisted by the American violinist, Olga Rudge. One number on the program was called "Sujet pour Violin," by Ezra Pound. For years Ezra Pound has made a study of ancient musics. He has now written an opera to the text of Villon's "Testament." He has engaged the interest of George Antheil in his opera and together they have transcribed and scored it for production.

EXHIBITIONS. The Société Anonyme will hold an exhibition of the works of Archipenko, at the Kingore Galleries, from January 20th through February 9th. Archipenko is in New York at work on important commissions. The Whitney Studio Club will expose the work of Maurice Becker and Ernest Fiene, from January 5th through the 20th . . . the Whitney Studio Galleries will open the first of its six exhibitions, sometime early in January, exposing the paintings of Charles DeMuth, Walt Kuhn, H. E. Schnakenberg, Charles Sheeler, Eugene Speicer, Allen Tucker, Nan Watson. The New Gallery opens a show on January 8th, which will stay until the end of the month, modern European, French, German and Russian. The Little Review will expose a group of Rayographs, from January 10th through February 1st . . . in conjunction with these chemical paintings by Man Ray, we are exposing temperature regulators, chemical apparatuses, self-aligning ball-bearings and other "ready-made" art objects.

CONTRIBUTORS. It may interest some of our more human readers to know that Jacques Baron is the youngest poet in

France: seventeen. Philippe Soupault and Louis Aragon have appeared in the Little Review in 1920. Tristan Tzara, the founder of Dada, is a poet of distinction and a leader in all the arts in Europe. G. Ribemont-Dessaignes is the author of "L'Empereur de Chine." Paul Eluard, Pierre Reverdy, Benjamin Péret, Pierre de Massot, René Crevel—each deserve a charming history: a sentence can tell you nothing of these very special, super-sensitized young men . . . some of them are contributors of "les feuilles libres." Man Ray is a "modern" American painter living in Paris, Juan Gris and Braque, are called Cubists. Modigliani is an Italian, who died a few years ago, unacknowledged and in poverty, he is now in the ascendant. Hans Arp is a Dane, but is identified with French and German activities. Robert Delaunay is an easy painter not in any group. André Masson, twenty-six, is just beginning to attract the attention of the "knowing." Max Ernst is a scissors-painter. Jean Hugo a versatile young artist, is not responsible for being the great-grand-son of Victor Hugo.—*jh.*



BY GEORGES BRAQUE



BY AMEDEE MODIGLIANI



BY AMEDEE MODIGLIANI



BY AMEDEE MODIGLIANI

ANGLO—MONGRELS AND THE ROSE

ENGLISH ROSE CONTINUED

EARLY English everlasting
quadrate Rose
paradox—Imperial
trimmed with some travestied flesh
tinted with bloodless duties dewed

with Lipton's teas
and grimed with crack-packed
herd-housing
petalling
the prim gilt
penetralia
of a lustre scioned
core-crown;

Rose of arrested impulses
self pruned
of the primordial attributes
- A tepid heart inhibiting
with tactful terrorism
the (Blossom) Populous
to mystic incest with its ancestry
establishing
by the divine right of self assertion
the post-conceptual
virginity of Nature
Wiping
it's pink paralysis
across the dawn of reason
A World-blush
glowing from
a never-setting-sun

Conservative Rose

storage
of British Empire-made pot-pourri
of dry dead men making a sweetened smell
among a shrivelled collectivity

Which august dust
stirred by
the trouser-striped prongs of statesmanship
(whenever politic)
rises upon the puff of press alarum
and whirling itself
deliriously around the unseen
Bolshevik subsides
in ashy circularity
'a wreath' upon the unknown
soldier's grave

And Jehovah strikes,
through the fetish
of the island hedges,
Exodus
who on his holiday
(induced
by the insidious pink
of Albion's ideal)
is looking for a rose

And the rose
rises
from the green
of a green lane
rosily-stubborn
and robustly round

- - - - -
Under a pink print
sunbonnet
the village maid
scowls at the heathen

Albion
in female form
salutes the alien Exodus

staring so hard—
warms his nostalgia
on her belligerent innocence

- - The maidenhead
drooping her lid
and pouting of her breast

- - forewarns
his amity

- - - - -
Amorphous meeting
in the month of May

- - - - -
This Hebrew
culled by Cupid on a thorn
of the rose

lays siege
to the thick hedgerows
where she blows
on Christian Sundays

She
simpering in her
ideological pink

He
loaded with Mosaic
passions that amass
like money

implores her to take pity
upon him
and come and be a 'lady in the City'

Maiden emotions
bread
on leaves of novels
where anatomical man
has no notion
of offering other than the bended knee
to femininity

and purity
passes in pleasant ways
as the cows graze—

For in those days
when Exodus courted the rose
literature was supposed to elevate us

So the maid with puffy
bosom where Jerusalem
 dreams to ease
 his head of calculations
 in the Zero of ecstasy
and a little huffy
bristles with chastity

For this is the last Judgment
when Jehovah
roars 'Open your mouth!
and I will tell you what you have been reading'

Exodus had been reading
Proverbs
making sharp distinction
 between the harlot
 and the Hausfrau arraying
 her offspring in scarlet
approving
 such as garner good advice like grain
 and such as know enough
 to come in from the rain - -

The would-be
secessionist from Israel's etiquette
 (shielding pliant Jewesses from shame
 less glances
And the giving
 of just percentages
 to matrimonial intermediaries)
is spiritually intrigued
by the Anglo-Saxon phenomenon
of Virginity
delightfully
on its own defensive!
This pouting
pearl beyond price
flouting
the male pretensions
to its impervious surface

Alice the gentile
Exodus the jew
after a few
feverish tiffs
and reparations
chiefly conveyed in exclamations
- - a means of expression
modified by lack of experience -
unite their variance
in marriage

Exodus
Oriental
mad to melt
with something softer than himself
clasps with soothing pledges
his wild rose of the hedges

While she
expecting

the presented knee
of chivalry
repells
the sub-umbilical mystery
of his husbandry
- hysterically

His passionate anticipation
of warming in his arms
his rose to a maturer colouration
which was all of aspiration
the grating upon civilization
of his sensitive organism
had left him

splinters upon an adamite
opposition
of nerves like stalactites

This dying chastity
had rendered up no soul - - -
Yet they pursued their conugal
dilemmas as is usual
with people
who know not what they do
but know that what they do
- - is not illegal

Deep in the nevrose
night he
peruses this body
divested of its upholstery
firmly insensitive
in mimicry
of its hypothetical model
a petal
of the English rose

An abstracted Ada
in myopic contemplation
of the incontemplatable
 compound rosette
of peerless negations

That like other Gods
has never appeared
leaving itself to be inferred
 Whereof
it is not seemly
that the one petal
shall apprehend
of the other petals
their conformity

For of this Rose
- wherever it blows
it is certain
that an impenetrable pink curtain
hangs between it and itself
And in metaphysical vagrance
it passes beyond the ken
of men
unless
possessed
of exorbitant incomes
And Then—
merely indicating its presence
by an exotic fragrance

A rose
-that like religions
before
becoming amateur—
enwraps itself
in esoteric
and exoteric
dimensions

the official
 and inofficial
 social morale
 The outer
 classes
 accepting the official
 of the inner - - -
 as a plausible
 gymnastic
 for disciplining the inofficial
 'flesh and the devil'
 to the ap parent impecca bility
 of the Eng - - -
 - - - and for
 Empire
 what form could be superior
 to the super-imposed
 slivers
 of the rose?

The best
 is this compressed
 all round-and-about-
 itself conformation
 Never letting out
 subliminal infection
 from hiatuses
 in its sub-roseal skeleton

Its petals hung
 with tongues
 that under the supervision
 of the Board of Education
 may never sing in concert - -
 for some
 singing h
 flat and some
 h sharp 'The Arch
 angels sing H'



BY ROBERT DELAUNAY



BY ROBERT DELAUNAY

There reigns a disproportionate
dis'armony
in the English Hanthem
And for further information
re the Rose—
and what it does to the nose
while smelling it
- - See PUNCH

ADA GIVES BIRTH TO OVA

Her face
screwed to the mimic-salacious
grotesquerie of a pain
larger than her intellect
- - - - They pull
A clotty bulk of bifurcate fat
out of her loins
to lie
for a period while performing hands
pour lactoid liquids through
and then mop up beneath it
their golden residue

A breathing baby
mystero-chemico Nemesis
of obscure attractions
(The incontinent
exudes into involuntary
retention
Uncouth conception of the incalculable)

The isolate consciousness
projected from back of time and space
pacing its padded cell

The soul
apprenticed to the butcher business
offers organic wares

to sensibility
A dim inheritor
of this undeniable flesh

The destinies
Genii
of traditional
Israel and of Albion
push on its ominous pillow
its racial birth-rights

('Curses for baby
from its godmothers)

- - - - -
Till the least godmother
pipes - - - in her fairy way
"Perhaps you know my name
- - Survival?
Curse till the cows come home
Behold my gift
The Jewish brain!"

So is the mystic absolute
the rose
that grows
from the red flowing
from the flank of Christ
thorned with the computations
of the old
Jehovah's gender
Where Jesus of Nazareth
becomes one-piece
with Judas Iscariot
in this composite
Anglo-Israelite

Out of a fatted frown
this spirit pokes its eyes

its star tipped handy-pandies
darting on the air

Solemn and unsurprised
and clumsily
lapped by insensitive maternity
it lies
waving its brand new feet
and feeds
its mongrel heart on Benger's food
for infants

MINA LOY

* NOTE:—"Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose" will be published in book form by the Contact Publishing Company, before another issue of the *Little Review* can possibly appear. We will not continue the poem in our next issue but close with the entrance of Esau Penfold.

A Marcella Meyer

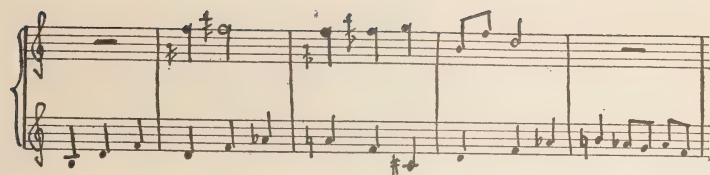
2.

F. L. T. Mesens

piano.

Bruxelles octobre 1922

Handwritten musical score for piano, marked *lent.* (lento). The score is written on four systems of staves, each system consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals, indicating a slow, lyrical piece.



LIGNES

Le rire est le propre de l'imbécile.

René DESCARTES

:—:—:—:—:—:

Il n'y a pas de fumée sans fil.

:—:—:—:—:—:

Que faut-il pour être heureux? Un peu d'encre!

:—:—:—:—:—:

Je ne vais jamais à la ligne, c'est mon seul prénom.

:—:—:—:—:—:

Vous croyez!

:—:—:—:—:—:

Voici une femme qui a des Aragons an derrière.

:—:—:—:—:—:

Vous vivez sans preuves, échangez vos confiances et riez, les rieurs seront toujours de l'autre côté.

:—:—:—:—:—:

J'allais vous le dire.

:—:—:—:—:—:

Je n'ai jamais ri qu'en riant, c'est une maladie de la mémoire.

JACQUES RIGAUT

THE ESTHETICS OF THE MACHINE

MANUFACTURED OBJECTS

ARTISAN AND ARTIST

CONTINUED

THE coming of mechanical beauty, of all these beautiful objects without any art intention, justifies me in making a rapid revision of old values, long considered definitive.

The Italian Renaissance (La Joconde, 15th century) is considered by the entire world as a summit, a height, an ideal to struggle toward. The School of Fine Arts founds its whole existence upon a servile imitation of this period. Could there be a more colossal error? The 15th century was a period of almost total decadence in the plastic realm. It was a period of imitation, of servile copying of the subject as opposed to the preceding epoch, called Primitive, which was great and immortal precisely because it invented its own forms and its own methods.

The Renaissance, not content with taking the means for the end and having a fixed belief in the fine subject, added two capital errors: the spirit of imitation and the copying of the fine subject.

The men of the Renaissance, thinking themselves superior to their predecessors, the Primitives, in imitating natural forms instead of seeking their inner rhythm, reproduced with complacency on enormous canvases the most striking and theatrical gestures and actions of their period. They were victims of the fine subject. If a subject is beautiful, an object beautiful, a form beautiful it is a value absolute in itself, rigorous, intangible.

One neither imitates nor copies a beautiful thing, one simply admires it; one can at the most create by his own talent an equivalent work.

The Renaissance, with its ecstasy for the fine subject, has produced the malady which we know as the School of Fine Arts. They longed for a thing which is materially impossible, a beautiful object cannot be copied, cannot be reproduced in the scientific sense of the word; the banal experience of thirty pupils before a beautiful object in the same light, at the same time and each one of the thirty making a different copy is conclusive enough: scientific methods like casting and photography are no happier in their results. Every manifestation of beauty, whatever it may be, bears within itself an unknown element which will always be a mystery to its admirer, as it is already to its creator, who caught between his conscious and unconscious self is incapable of determining the line between the two; the objective and the subjective in a continual struggle are so interwoven that the resulting creation always remains a partial enigma to the artist. The beautiful machine is the modern fine subject, it also cannot be copied. Although I tried personally in 1918 to catch in several pictures the equivalence of the beautiful mechanical object I always carefully avoided making a copy.

The mechanical object, even if it is not completely beautiful, can serve as well

as a landscape or a figure as first material for a plastic work. It is a matter of choice in the beginning; wishing to obtain brilliancy and intensity I should prefer this material to any other.

I return to the question stated above, that of the situation of the professional artists confronted with the formidable Renaissance of the artisans of the street and of the machine. A state of competition is created by the intensive production of the beautiful object.

Two producers are in existence, will they destroy each other?

The question is this: throughout the world there is a need of indisputable beauty, which is perhaps just now more of a necessity than ever before because of the actual hardness of life and of the weakening of religion. When life is painful the desire for an ideal is engendered. If at the moment there is a frenzy for physical gratification and for huge spectacles, it is because we seek a compensation for the intense and difficult life we are leading. If these physical gratifications could be replaced by an appreciation of the plastic beauty which surrounds us, the individual would function more harmoniously.

I believe that the need for beauty is more general than is realized. Not only from the child whom I mentioned a little while ago but from all of us comes the demand for beauty. Three-fourths of the gestures and aspirations of today are restless with this desire. Here, too, comes in the law of supply and demand; but the demand at the present moment is addressed especially to the professional artist, thanks to the prejudice, which I have mentioned, which makes us blind to the beautiful object manufactured by the artisan, because it is not the work of the "artist."

I have just seen the spectacle of "The Fair of Paris," where invention fairly springs up at every step, where the effort of execution is prodigious.

I was stupefied to see that all these men who have organized these admirable panels of detached pieces, these astonishing fantasies of letters and of light, these powerful costly machines, do not understand, do not feel that they are the real artists, that they have overturned all the modern plastic ideas. They are completely ignorant of the plastic quality which they create. Ignorance in such a case is perhaps salutary, but this vexing question of the unconscious in artistic creation is a painful drama which will long trouble the seekers of mystery.

Suppose, as I said a little while ago, the immense world of engineers, of workmen, of merchants, of shop keepers, become aware of the beauty which they manufacture and in which they live. The demand for beauty would be almost satisfied for them; the peasant would be satisfied with his beautiful mowing machine of many colours and the merchant with his melody of cravats. Why must these people go into raptures on Sunday over the doubtful pictures in the Louvre and elsewhere? Why do they go to gaze upon a poor imitation of a landscape hanging on a wall when a beautiful electric meter is at hand which they do not see? They believe in the hierarchy of the arts, to them an electric meter could never be beautiful because it was not made for beauty. But the very lack of intention is one of its great claims to beauty.

I insist that it does not amuse me to make a paradox; I am trying in the clear-

est manner possible and in my modest way to throw a little light upon this curious, troubling mental state of the majority of human beings.

I hope that a day will come when everyone will finally see this clearly, the revolutionary day which will be the end of ninety-nine out of every hundred professional artists, the day which I, a professional artist, shall welcome: the so-called artistic production is so mediocre, the percentage of beauty so rare among professionals that the average in the useful production of the artisan is superior.

Among a hundred pictures are two beautiful? Among a hundred manufactured objects, thirty are beautiful and meet the demand of art, beauty and utility at the same time.

As for myself, my choice is made, I salute and await the event.

The artisan will regain his place which he should always have kept, for he is the true creator, he it is who daily, modestly, unconsciously, creates and invents these handsome objects, these beautiful machines which make us live. His unconsciousness saves him. The immense majority of professional artists have become hateful because of their pride and their self consciousness; they are a blight.

It is always in decadent periods that is seen the hideous hypertrophy of the individual among the false great artists. (The Renaissance).

Go to one of the exhibitions of machines, for the machine has its annual salons quite in the manner of the artists, go to the automobile, the aviation show, the Paris Fair, they are the most beautiful spectacles in the world. Look at our street shows, "look well at labour," every time you find the work of an artisan it is good, every time that it is violated by a professional it is bad.

The manufacturers must never leave their own field and turn to professional artists, only evil would result. They believe, these fine fellows, that above them is a group of demi-gods who make admirable things much more beautiful than theirs, who annually exhibit these immortal masterpieces in the National Salon or elsewhere. They go there on opening days in frock coats and go into raptures before these imbeciles who are not worthy to tie their shoe laces. If they could strangle this stupid prejudice, if they could but realize that theirs are the most beautiful annual exhibitions of plastic art, they would have confidence in the admirable men who surround them, the artisans, and they would not go seeking elsewhere the pretentious incapables who massacre their work. What conclusion shall we draw from all this? That the artisan is everything, no indeed, beautiful as their production is I do not wish to make a hierarchy in my turn and I know that there are works of artists which are superior but they are rare. I know that these men—few as they are—are capable of rising in their plastic concept to a height which dominates this first plane of Beauty. These men must be able to consider the work of the artisan and of nature as first material, must know how to arrange it, to absorb it, to hold in perfect equilibrium the conscious and subconscious, the objective and subjective.

They must impose upon the world work so dazzling and so sure that it will dominate the generations to come. Therefore a union between the artisan and the true artist is much to be desired. To avoid immense waste they should live

more closely together, should have more contacts, so that each in his own domain may benefit thereby. It is up to you who are listening to me to find the way. The plastic life is terribly dangerous, its ambiguity is perpetual. No standard is possible, no arbitration tribunal is in existence. I say again, it is for you to find the way.

Two pictures, not completely identical, were shown to the impressionist painter, Sisley, and he could not tell which was the false one.

We must live and create in a perpetual agitation, in this continual ambiguity. The one who handles beautiful things is sometimes quite unaware of them; in this connection I shall always recall the year when I installed the Autumn Salon and was fortunate enough to be next to the Aviation Show which was about to open. Through the partitions I could hear the hammers and the songs of the mechanics. Although accustomed to these shows, I had never before been so much impressed. Never had so brutal a contrast confronted me. I passed from enormous dull gray surfaces, pretentious in their frames, to beautiful metallic objects, hard, useful, with pure colours, to steel with its infinite variety, with its play of vermillions and blues. The geometric power of forms dominated all.

The mechanics saw me pass, they knew that they had artists for neighbours and in their turn they asked permission to see our show; and these good fellows who had never seen an exhibition of pictures in their lives, who were uncorrupted, who had been reared close to the first beautiful material fell into ecstasies before works which I shall not trouble to mention.

I shall always see a sixteen year old urchin, with fire red hair, a new jacket of bright blue, orange trousers and his hand stained with Prussian blue, gazing enraptured on the nude women in their gilt frames, not having the slightest suspicion that with his modern workman's clothes, blazing with colours, he literally killed the Salon, there remained upon the walls only vaporous shadows in old fashioned frames. This dazzling boy who had the look of having been brought forth by an agricultural machine was the symbol of the exposition next door, of the life of tomorrow, when prejudice shall be destroyed, when finally all the world shall see clearly and the Beauty of the true artisan and of the true artist shall be released.

FERNAND LÉGER

May, 1923

THE READER CRITIC

CIVILIZATION FOLLOWING OUR FLAG

D. F. H., Honolulu, Hawaii:

YOUR announcement of a younger French Poet's issue recalls the excellent Ezra Pound number on the French Moderns: are they passé so soon? Nevertheless we await with interest every copy of *The Little Review*, French or not. Our Fair City is now a cheap copy of cheaper Los Angeles and all the mainland sends us is soldiers, tourists, movies and politics. Papeete is closer to Paris than we are and we're even farther from New York than the Tahitian's White governors: as far as our civilized life is concerned.

REQUEST FOR LIGHT

B. S. S., Tuxedo Park, N. Y.:

HOW about giving us a line on the manifestations of the "French spirit," other than the poets and painters? There's Mistinguett, Bernhardt's successor in the triumph of spirit over years. The sparkle of the woman at her age should be analysed. Let jh do it! Then there's Siki—French to the Core—a Pan if there ever was one. A natural man let loose in Paris and the high specialization of the Prize Ring. Even the bad boys playing at Indian and cowboy at the Algonquin are too shocked by him. A Master in Ironics should watch him and report the effect of acquired technique (called science by the pimply-faced gym hangers-on) on his punching powers and spirit. The same reporter should speculate on the necessity of form, in his own and the fighter's craft: the present Siki and early Dempsey—Drieser and Anderson (Sherwood); Carpentier—William Butler Yeats.

NOW WE KNOW WHAT'S WANTED

SHERWOOD ANDERSON'S cover blurb for Arlie Gelston by Roger Sergel: "Here is Iowa really writing of Iowa. That is what we want." Africans of Africa, musicians of musicians, Secretary Davis, of Labor. Sergel, or any other writer interest,—as writers first: from or of Iowa, Ohio, or their environs, later.

MEMO TO BOK PEACE COMMISSION

WE can never have World Peace because we can never have an International temperament. Statement attributed to Mary Garden in LOS ANGELES TIMES.

"TRY THIS OVER ON YOUR STEINERT"

Temporary New Yorker:

I FOUND this in the Times last Sunday: "Henry Cowell, a young American played his own compositions in Vienna . . . let us hope they don't think all Americans play that way." jh once asked "how long will composers hold on to the octave?" Henry Cowell, young, Irish, is the only other I have heard directly ask the same question. He has asked, thought, and composed beyond it and now wishes for a new beyond-piano to play. He has been composing since he was eleven, studied and knows Chinese music, knows American jazz . . . The Greeks had only five, the Church used the Octave and five, Bach used all, Beethoven fought three years to get recognition for the use of Octave, five and three. Is this the period of "revolution" in Art? in Music? Years ago Margaret Anderson asked the musicians, ask them again, Little Review.

As a point of information Henry Cowell's Three Irish Legends: The Voice of Lir, The Hero Sun, The Manaunaum: Dynamic Motion, and Exultation are published by Breitkopf and Hartel. His unpublished Antinomy is ranked with the others, as his best.

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if you are very weak—if you are very strong—if you are ill—if you are little—if you are bored—read my books—they will heal you—you will see that all the world is mad—you will see why logic should be suppressed—every secret will be revealed to you—my manifestoes will tell you that nothing is of any importance—that there is neither good nor evil—that everything is permitted—and that man should reach out toward nothingness—indifference is the only legal and effective medicine—indifference without effort, indifference without importance—twenty centuries of history have served only to demonstrate the truth of my manifestoes—because truth does not exist—language is a play for children—morality and the laws of causality have divided life into fragments for us—under different forms: art—philosophy — sociology — politeness — justice — ethnography — politics—psychology—etc.—if you wish to become men again who hear with your ears and speak with your mouths—if you wish to know why one must not take seriously art morality religion politics grammar which were only pastimes in the beginning—simple songs like the sport of nightingales—read my manifestoes—you can write me that I am mad.

Tristan TZARA

